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NOTE-BOOK OF THE PIANIST AND OF THE SINGER.

METHOD OF SINGING OF THE PARIS CONSERVATOIRE.

Coded by MM. Cherubini, committee reporter; Mohul, Gosset, Garat, Plantade, Langle, Richer, Guichard, in collaboration of Mr. Ginguene, member of the Institute, and Signor Bernardo Mengozzi, singing master.

(Translated from the French by Camilla Urso.)

SECOND PART.

ON THE PRACTICE OF THE METHOD.

CHAPTER I.

POSITION OF THE PUPIL IN THE EXERCISE OF SCALES.

The natural imperfections of the organs that contribute to the formation of the voice, and the faults that result from a long and severe use of the faculties that have been given us by nature, are difficult to rectify.

It is the duty of a conscientious master, to look for the causes of the first, in order to correct them; and he must, while it is in his power to do so, employ all possible means to preserve the students from contracting the others; because if these defects are permitted to become firmly established, and subsequently, endeavor is made to eradicate them, neither care nor patience can accomplish their remedy, and such a pupil, who might become an excellent singer if well taught, will be, if not a very bad, at least a very indifferent singer, because of the neglect in beginning his musical education.

The defects most injurious to singing, come often from a wrong position of all the parts that form the mouth; where sound is not formed, but these somewhat modify it. Therefore the master's close heed to them is very essential.

As nature has not equally divided its gifts in equal measure to every one, but has given to some the mouth too small, and to others too large.

In others the teeth are too long; or too short.

With many the upper jaw is advanced over the lower one; in others it is the reverse. It becomes the master, in such cases, to obviate, so far as he can, these natural defects, and to use his best skill in effecting the objects which the singing method aims at.

For this purpose it will be very essential for the master to stand before the student in all the exercises prescribed for him, and stop him, instantly if he see him deviate from the rules laid down by the method.

Of all the exercises of singing, that of the Scales, is the most difficult, while at the same time, it is the most necessary. With that, well directed, you can form, make full, develope and strengthen the voice of a pupil; it is by the same exercise that is found the means of correcting the faults of the voice and its natural imperfections. The old Italian masters recommended that exercise, in preference to all others, and we have many examples that prove to us the wisdom of the advice.

1st. In order to make a scale well, the pupil must put himself first, in an erect position, without making effort to maintain it.

2d. He will hold the head high, but not throw

it backward, because, if the muscles of the throat are too much stretched, they will not act freely.

3d. The mouth must be free and open so far as its conformation for each pupil will admit of, and pronounce, without altering, the vowel on which he must sing the scale.

4th. The pupil must take care not to assume sinister looks; he must also try to avoid making faces.

5th. He must press the tongue lightly, behind the inferior teeth.

6th. The superior jaw bone must be parallel with, and but very little above the inferior jaw.*

Before giving the sound, and during the time the pupil opens and prepares the mouth in the manner shown above, (in which position it must remain during the whole duration of the sound), he must take his breath quickly.

See in chapter second of the first part, how inspiration and expiration are made; this one sound must, especially be sustained and well managed for the longest possible time.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE EXERCISE OF THE SCALE.

The exercise of the scale must be on the vowel A, in ascending and in descending.

When the voice of the pupil is made sure on that vowel, it should be practiced on the vowel E.

As soon as the pupil will have taken his breath, he will give the sound. That must be soft, but true.

In emitting, an increase must be made up to the highest point and then gradual diminution, insensibly, without moving either the mouth or the tongue, and without giving any shock to the breast.†

We must observe that the height of the voice is found precisely in the middle of the duration of the sound, that is if the pupil has strength enough in the lungs to keep the respiration twenty seconds, the height will be found at the tenth and eleventh seconds.

Each sound of the scale must be done in the manner indicated above, and the pupil must be told to respire between each sound, in exercising him upon the following scale.‡

*As there are no rules without exceptions to them, we think it is necessary to observe at which opening of the mouth the pupil might bring a better quality of sound, more sonorous, purer, in order to make him open the mouth in this manner, provided that such a position does not affect too much the precise articulation of the vowel on which he must sing the scale.

†A sound sustained in this manner is called in Italy "Messa di voce," which means prolongation of the voice.

This prolongation of the voice must have a beginning, a middle, an end; on all the sounds of the scale, as many "messa di voce" must be made. The best singers never prepare a pause, or a final cadenza, or a trillo but by these means.

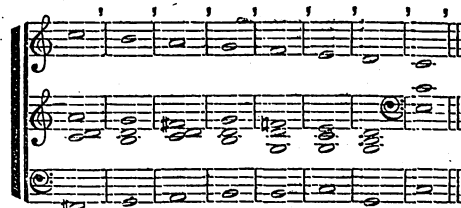
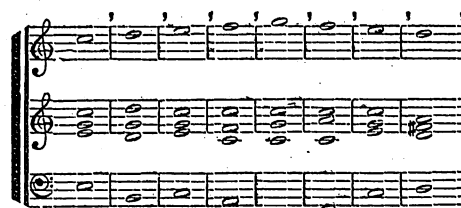
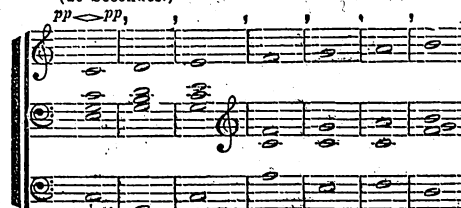
‡It has been remarked that the soprano and tenor voices (voix de dessus), in making the scale of C, give the A, sixth note, and the E, tenth note of the scale, almost always too flat. To correct this fault, it is necessary to make the pupil open his mouth, in giving these two sounds, a little more than he opens it for the other notes. We observe also that in singing the ascending scale the voice has a tendency to lower, and the contrary is observed when the scale goes down; to these variations to which the voice is subject, the same corrective is to be opposed, and applied when required.

EXERCISE OF THE SCALE.

to serve to the formation of the voice and to ensure the intonation, and to learn the art of respiration.

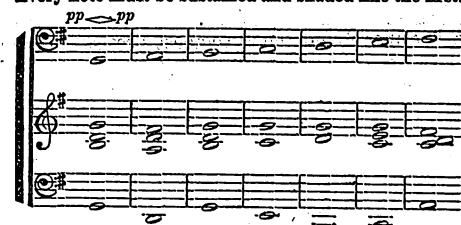
Every note must be sustained and shaded like the first.

(20 Secondes.)



SCALE FOR BASS AND CONTRALTO.

Every note must be sustained and shaded like the first.

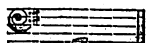


N. B.—For the Mezzo-Soprano this scale will only reach up to E and the highest F.

For the tenor voice, it is the same scale in all its extension, but an octave lower.

For the Bass and contralto voice, the scale must be transposed into the key of G, the point of

starting for the Bass will be the following degree:



and for the Contralto, upon this one,



It will be the same for all the exercises that we shall give you in this method, when desirable to make them develop the voices we speak of here.

This exercise must be practiced every day, but with care, especially by a beginner, otherwise the chest might suffer from it.

To avoid that distress the master must stop not only this exercise, but all others immediately when he sees that the pupil becomes fatigued.

(To be Continued.)

[Correspondence of the N. O. Picayune.]

THE SPIRIT OF THE FRENCH STAGE.

PARIS, November, 1866.

There are some characters which cannot be touched with impunity except by genius's hands. Rossini has certainly illustrated, with singular power, Shakspeare's "Otello." It was an Italian of wonderful genius interpreting an Italian piece. Donizetti has added pathos to Scott's, and charms to Lucy Ashton's mournful fate. Mozart has invested Don Juan with singular enchantments even after the Corneilles and Molières had made him immortal. Ary Scheffer (whom M. Guizot happily calls the "painter of the soul") has certainly awaked deeper sympathy for Margaret and for Mignon by his pictures. By the side of these successes how thickly lie the failures! Verdi, himself, failed to impart additional interest to "Macbeth;" Auber found the "Tempest" resist his efforts to adorn it with those graces and touches beyond the reach of words, but which music so easily commands. What artist ever illustrated Shakspeare with work on canvas or on marble? Has the engraver on wood or copper added any interest to Scott's works? You will not, then, be surprised to hear M. Ambroise Thomas's new opera, "Mignon," has failed to satisfy us entirely. It is successful, but our pleasure is in a manner marred by disappointment. Our imagination craves for an image nearer the poetical creature floating in it. You have seen a favorite actor play a part night after night until your mind came to look on him as the very embodiment of the characters. When his successor came you could not get used to him. Something shocked you. His creation lacked reality, though it may have been better than his predecessors. This is something like the impression made by this play. It fails to present our "Mignon" to us. Mons. Ambroise Thomas's musical career has been a singular one. His fortune as a composer has never been commensurate with the apparent success of his works. Their attraction does not seem to last long, and some of them which were particularly successful, (take *Psyche*, for instance) soon disappeared from the play bills. Is it because his music is due to his science rather than to his inspiration? To his head rather than to his heart? And however skillful the composer may be, he fails to exercise that attraction which the heart alone yields. This is the fault of all our present composers. Mons. Auber himself never touches the heart. He is the witty, brilliant, fluent talker, but all he says comes from the head, the heart has no share in his accents. It is probable, too, Mons. Ambroise Thomas's education militated in a sensible measure against his career. Parents never make a greater mistake than when they force children in their infancy to embrace a career. Give nature play. Allow the child to pay proper tribute to the ani-

mal, to romp, play, vent its animal spirits, acquire muscle, firm, nerves, love of the external world—that eternal poem which poets and artists do but attempt to interpret. Cage the child in study, you destroy half its powers. It becomes an artificial creature. Its brain prematurely crystallizes and becomes hardened to the external world, which ceases to make impression on it. Mons. Ambroise Thomas's father was a music master at Metz, and when the baby was only four years old he taught it musical notation; when it was seven, he taught it the violin and the piano. Of course, the baby went to school all the time, and the studies were severer than those of most children, in consequence of the geographical position of Metz. Situated, as you know, on the dividing line between Germany and France, and inhabited by people who speak German much more than they do French, the children are taught both languages. Imagine the labors forced on young Ambroise Thomas. He entered the Conservatory when he was eighteen: in his twentieth year he carried off the prize as a pianist; when twenty-one, he won the prize of harmony; when twenty-two, he received the grand prize of composition, and went to Italy at the expense of the Government. You see what a hot house plant he is. He returned from Italy when twenty-eight years old, and gave, at the Opera Comique, his first work, "La Double Echelle." His best works are "Le Caid," (which you have so often seen in New Orleans) and "Le Songe d'une Nuit d'Été." He is apparently one of the unhappiest men in Paris. The pupils of the conservatory, where he is professor, have given him the nickname "sombre accueil," in consequence of his gloomy air. He goes about with a head bent on the ground, inanimate eyes, indifferent, sad countenance, and yet it is said when he is in company of old friends, nobody is more full of fun, wit, enthusiasm, gaiety; he is the soul of the company, now delighting them by anecdotes, presented by a smart repartee, then by some brilliant thought about art. He is about 55 years old, and has long been an officer of the Legion of Honor. I shall not fatigue you with an analysis of the play. Who has not read Goethe's work in Mr. Carlyle's excellent translation? The "book" is, of course, absurd at times; the lyric stage has its rigors; and as Parisians, cannot bear an ill-digestion after their excellent dinners and choice wines, Mignon is married. Mme. Cabal is a brilliant Philone. M. Achard is an agreeable Wilhelm Meister. The opera is brought out with great splendor.

Mlle. Carlin, just prize of comedy at the Conservatory, has been engaged by the Guité Theatre.

M. Bastien, one of the oldest and most honorable actors of the vaudeville, is dead; he was universally popular, although he filled the humble post of "utility."

The porter of the grand opera is dead. What tales he could have told, had he written his memoirs.

It is said suit for divorce is about to be brought by the husband of one our favorite lyric actresses, whose husband has gone roaming.

The Theatre Lyrique is thinking out a translation of "Lucretia Borgia," Mlle. St. Urbine in the leading part.

Mons. Notzay and Mlle. Adahmar, two graduates of the Conservatory, have been engaged by the Odeson.

Mons. Brun, who taught Mons. Vallaret singing, has sued him for his lessons; he asks 14,000f. Mons. Vallaret offers 2,000f. The latter has just been re-engaged at the Grand Opera on these terms: First year 45,000f.; second year 55,000f.; third year 65,000f.

The Opera Comique has revived Mehul's "Joseph." The "book" does not contain a single woman's part; even Mme. Potiphar clutches at nothing; like Mme. Benoiton, she is always "out." It is said Alex. Duval, who wrote the "book," omitted feminine characters to lecture indirectly Baour Lormier for the ridiculous love adventures with which he filled "Omasis," his tragedy. The

French of this year of grace cannot bear an opera without one of Eve's daughters, so Mlle. Roze was served up as Benjamin and was thought graceful, ingenious and beautiful. Capaul was the applauded Joseph.

The Theatre Lyrique will soon give us Richard Wagner's "Lohengrin!"

Five or six years ago Mons. Ed. Fournier found in the bottom of a dusty chest of old papers sundry papers which he vowed were plays by Beaumarchais. It was then said the French comedy would play it shortly. We are again informed the French comedy will play it shortly.

Mons Duprez is in a vein of good luck; he has received 91,000 dollars for the portion of his lot required for a new street, and he has sold his house on the remainder of his lot for \$110,000.

Mme. Ristori has written to her friend here that her present intentions are to remain twelve months in America; Upon her return to Europe she will bid farewell to the stage and make Florence her home. The palace she is building on the Lung Arnoo will then be completed. This building is in an elegant and yet severe style, suited with the austere genius of the tragic muse. In a frieze between pilasters of two different orders of architecture she is represented in her most celebrated parts.

The Theatre Lyrique is about to revive Mons. Gounod's "Philemon et Baucis."

The French Comedy has revived "Don Juan d'Autriche" for the debuts of Febvre.

Fredrick Lemaitre is about to reappear in a play called "Le Pere Gachette," to be brought out at the Porte St. Martin.

Mme. Borghi-Mamo announces in the Paris papers she desires an engagement.

The Theatre Lyrique and Opera Comique are striving for Mons. Capoul; he is bound to the latter by an engagement with a penalty of \$3,000; he has paid this penalty, and the Manager of the former opera has offered to allow his wife (Mme. Miolan) to sing at the Opera Comique as long as Mons. Capoul sings at the Theatre Lyrique. This offer has been refused. Mons. Auber insists upon Mons. Capoul for his new opera, and Mons. Gounod refuses to give the Theatre Lyrique "Romeo and Juliette" unless he has Mons. Capoul for Romeo. It seems likely that the latter will be obliged to remain at the Opera Comique, as by the French law no artist of an imperial theatre can sing at another theatre until twelve months after his engagement expires, unless his manager consents.

The widow of the celebrated actor, Potier, died a few days since, 80 years old. She was the daughter of an architect of Nantes, named Blandin. She was born in 1787; she made her appearance on the stage while yet an infant; Ferrière's father saw her, was struck by her, and engaged her, giving her the stage name, Mlle. Blandine. She met Potier and they married. Her husband soon became celebrated. She retired from the stage to devote her whole care to her husband's fortune, which she managed like a good housewife. Two of her sons Charles and Henri Potier, are still on the stage; they are creditable actors.

An effort is making to hold an universal festival of an orpheon, choral and instrumental musical societies of the world. There will be a considerable series of concerts.

M. Eugene Prevost, so well known in your city, now gives winter concerts in the Theatre du Prince Imperial with the same orchestra he led all summer in the Champ Elysees.

The French Comedy proposes to play next year a new five act comedy, by M. Emile Angier; the most admirable tragedies and comedies of its theatre, and all the pensioned actors will be required to do duty during the exhibition.

M. Alex. Dumas, Jr., will bring out in the spring his new piece, *Les Idées de M^{me}. Aubray*. The two leading parts will be played by Mlle. Delaporte and M. Pierre Berton.

M. Vilaret has appeared for the first time in the part of Vasco de Gama (*L'Africaine*), at the Paris Grand Opera; he was quite successful.

GAMMA.